10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

CHAPTER III

THE ALBANIAN HOUSE

342 At its simplest an Albanian peasant's house was very simple indeed—no more than a small, square room with walls of undressed stones from the nearest stream; a man so poor had no money or time to spend on transporting better materials from a distance. The stones were bedded in mud and bound together every three feet or so by horizontal beams; in their turn the 'belts' were strengthened, particularly at the corners, by cross-timbers. The roof was a steep framework of timber covered with stone slabs but never with thatch or boards, for the house would stand no chance if an enemy flung a blazing firebrand on these. The doorway was low, but the wooden door, emblematic of the insecurity that lasted until Turkish rule ended, was strong enough not to be easily [354] broken down from outside. In most cases there was not even a hole in the wall for window, and there was never a chimney—a ring of stones in the middle kept the log-fire in its place, and the smoke found its own way out between the rafters unhampered by a ceiling. A kitchen-crook, a most important article, was suspended over the fire from a tie-beam. The floor was of beaten earth. In sum, the house was the most rudimentary type of stone and timber architecture.

352 415 The furnishings were in keeping. They consisted of a three-legged stool or two, a box or pile of bedding but no bedsteads, a rough shelf with a frying-pan and a few platters and pots, a big metal jug for boiling water, an earthenware pot for holding drinking water, a round dining-table on stumpy supports about ten inches high, a flour-bin, a pan for mixing bread, perhaps a pan for baking it, and nothing for washing—the nearest stream served for that. A metal tray with coffee cups inverted to keep them clean and a tiny pot with a long handle for making Turkish coffee rested by the hearth, a few satchels of home-dressed wool and a distaff hung on the wall, and a hen stared at the company from her nest under [353] the eaves. The only ornaments were yellow maize-cobs, rosy pomegranates, and strings of onions or garlic, all hanging from the 000 tie-beams. At meal times a cat took up a vantage point under the

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At meal times a cat took up a vantage point under the dining-table, to filch what it could. It was never caressed or deliberately fed; the whole Balkans believed that either indulgence would stop it from catching mice.

A man and his wife, with one or two small children, might live in this house. Of a kind hardly paralleled in the Balkans, except in the poorer parts of southern Greece, it was not common in Albania as a permanent dwelling. As soon as its master could scrape together the necessary money, he added a sitting-room. As he provided all the labour himself and needed to hire only one professional, a stone-mason who, like all his brethren in the Balkans, was also a carpenter, ten pounds sterling were enough. The sitting-room might be built on top of the kitchen (*shtëpí* or *shpi*, lit. 'house', from Lat. *hospitium*) or against one of its walls. It had a wooden floor, a chimney at one end, a window or two, a niche in the wall beside the hearth for the utensils for making coffee, and a few wooden pegs near the door on which to hang up rifles; it might also have a ceiling. It generally had a separate entrance, for sitting-rooms were men's apartments and Catholic, Moslem, and Orthodox Albanians all segregated their young women. The Catholics and Orthodox attributed this custom to plain jealousy, and the Moslems, less convincingly, to a desire to obey their Prophet's order. In the evening and when not at work outside during the daytime, the master of the house with his men guests reclined, ate and smoked in the sitting-room, while his wife and children remained in the draughty kitchen. But the men were less comfortable than might have been expected. Since Albanian chimneys seldom drew, acrid fumes from the wood fire filled the room and almost made them weep unmanly tears. But not quite, for if they succumbed, they would be derided as 'poor sticks' who 'would never see to shoot'.

Guests, in the form of family friends or strangers 'sent by God', often came for a night. Because there were no inns in the Albanian countryside except on the long-distance tracks used by pack-horses, it was the rule that a benighted stranger might claim supper and shelter till the morning from any house he saw. The hospitality was never refused or charged for, but travellers of standing were expected to give a sum proportionate not to the hospitality offered but to their supposed wealth.

As soon as the children in a two-roomed house grew up, its master must build again. His daughters went forth to live in their

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reasons, be no openings in the ground-floor walls except the doorway, but square holes were left in those of the upper floor for windows. Except in rich houses these 'windows' were not glazed. At night they were closed in rich as in poor houses by propping stone slabs against them or sliding wooden panels across them. Those in a one-storeyed cluster were usually too high for the curious outside to peep through or the hostile to shoot through. Nikollë Gjetë Coka of Breg i Matit, putting his trust in the exemplary peace which King Zog's government had established throughout Albania, neglected this ancient precaution and was shot in 1938 by some Mirdites who thrust their rifles through the window of the room in which he sat at supper. At the top of a tower there were usually loop-holes, splayed to give a wider field of fire and low enough to let a man kneel as he shot. When these were found in a clustered house, as they often were, it was naturally on a vulnerable side, where they might also be reinforced by turrets in the wall of the farmyard. In the kitchen, where the women and children must spend the day and evening, the hearth continued in the middle because more people could sit round it in that position.

In planning his house the Albanian householder sought chiefly shelter from the elements and his enemies, and took no thought for beauty. When villages are picturesque, as many are, it is always for such extraneous reasons as their site, the line of their roofs against a lightly clouded sky, and the greenery surrounding them, rather than for the architecture of their individual houses. A tower, it is true, may have machicoulis over its door or under an upper window, and these give it distinction; its elevation and its usual situation on a knoll may also be attractive. The best examples, some of them over two hundred years old, may be seen in Lurë. But few clustered houses are more than an assemblage of featureless boxes.

In the bigger houses the furnishings altered little from those of the simplest type already described. Mattresses and pillows were probably added to the bedding, and the floor of the sitting-room, instead of being left bare, was covered with mats made from reeds grown in the swamps near the coast. In the cold north and north-east there was usually a layer of earth under the mats; it made an admirable shield against winter blasts. Chairs remained rarities and stools were still confined to the kitchen with its chilly earthen floor. Workers being more plentiful, enough animals to make butter could be kept; the churn was made by hollowing out a section of tree-trunk.

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tree-trunk.[1] A similar section, split lengthways and hollowed out, made two wash-tubs for laundry work. Toilet appliances, a basin and ewer bought in the bazaar, and paraffin lamps from the same source, completed the list of additions.

The above outline omits many small variations in Albanian houses and furniture as irrelevant to the main subject of this book. Mention must be made, however, of certain houses which differed widely from the average type. The first were found among the Highlanders (Alb. *Malësorë*, 'mountaineers'), the semi-nomads who wintered on the soggy plains at the mouth of the river Mat. These houses had walls of planking or wattle and daub, with roofs of tiles or strips of wood. They rested on vertical sections of tree trunks about two feet high which had been laid at close intervals on the ground but had not been driven into it like piles. In this way they kept snug and dry even during the winter floods. All over Albania granaries were raised some distance from the ground in order to keep out the rats, but so far as is known, there were no houses on stilts except at the mouth of the Mat.

A number of Highland houses also contained a child's play-pen which might be as little as twenty-five inches long, wide and high. A shallow porringer projected from one of the top bars, chipped from the same piece of wood as the bar itself. In this pen Highland children spent all their winter days from the time they could crawl until they were three years old. They had no toys, but practised walking round the pen, sometimes stopping to eat a little bread and milk from the porringer with the diminutive home-made, wooden spoon which was tied to the bar, or merely gazing broodingly at the fire. The mothers meanwhile cooked, spun or gossiped, each secure in the knowledge that her child was on the dry floor of the kitchen and not sitting outside in the quagmire of mud that reached up to the very doorstep. The Highlanders said they invented both the houses and the play-pen themselves, but it is possible that they were at least advised by the Austro-Hungarian troops who were stationed in the neighbourhood for part of the war of 1914–18.

In Shpat, near Elbasan, huts were built for many bridegrooms. In the higher villages trunks of young trees about as tall as a man's waist were planted in a rectangle of the size desired, their boughs, while still green and flexible, were laced in and out of these uprights, and cross-pieces of timber were nailed to the uprights

[1] [i.e., of tree-trunk--Analyst]

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to keep the structure rigid. When a light roof thatched with straw or more boughs had been nailed on and the inner walls had been plastered with mud, the hut was ready for occupation. Quickly built and costing only the price of the nails, it was often larger and more comfortable than the sitting-room in the adjacent house. A folk-tradition says it was long the handsomest dwelling to which any country Albanian aspired. At lower altitudes in Shpat the huts were flimsier as befitted the milder climate. They were usually made of reeds plastered with cow-dung, which was sufficient to keep out the wind.

Three houses of more splendid type, each containing about forty souls, exist at Dibër—Hysni Dema's at Homesh, Murat Kaloshi's at Kandër, and Cen Elezi's at Sllovë. The owners were rich and most hospitable Moslem notables. As some of the older generation were schooled in Constantinople, they complemented their culture and their position by building establishments of Turkish inspiration, with separate blocks of buildings for the men's apartments (Tk. *selamlik*), stables, granaries, storehouses, kitchens and women's apartments (Tk. *haremlik*). These are all enclosed within a high stone wall with defensive turrets at every weak point, especially near the one and only gateway. The women's apartments are really only a series of bedrooms, one for each married man and his wife and children, and the women, for want of a common sitting-room, sit normally in the kitchen like their poorer sisters. Softer mattresses, richer floor-rugs, and fireplaces in the bedrooms indicate the family's wealth, but European beds, tables and chairs are still barred, partly to avoid rousing envy in more backward neighbours. Cen Elezi's sitting-room was a magnificent oblong, warmed by a log-fire in a huge chimney at the far end from the door and softly lit on both its long sides by a row of short windows at the top of the tall walls; enemies outside had as usual to be prevented from shooting through the outer windows, and the men inside must not be able to look through the inner ones at the women's apartments. In this room a hundred travellers supped and slept every night, going their separate ways at dawn; a chef, working in a kitchen of his own and slaughtering a couple of sheep or an ox per night, provided the unvarying menu of soup, boiled meat, bread and rice pilaff. In their retired kitchen the women catered for themselves and the children, when there was no overflow from the chef's.

352 two transverse ledges nailed to them and serving as feet (Figure 11): 2 1
low, three-legged stools and semicircular arm chairs; bedsteads of posts rammed into the ground, floors made of boards or intertwined switches, and heaped up hay or ferns (Figure 11); 2 1 cradles which are
415 carried like a rucksack on the back. Among the kitchen utensil the baking bowl is important; it is made red hot and then the dough is placed in it and the baking bell is placed over it, on top of which embers are again heaped. Large wooden tubs with hoops of hazelnut are used to keep the wine, and smaller ones for water, butter, and brine for the cheese; sacks of sheep's or goat's hide are used to keep
354 milk. The open hearth fire, at the same time heating and cooking place, is situated in the center of the living room in a depression filled with loam; above it is suspended the kettle by a bent branch in its natural state, or by an iron chain; to the side of the fireplace a recess has been made into the wall to form a niche for the stove bench. Originally any kind of outlet for the smoke was lacking, then a hole for the smoke was left open, a flue was added; but it was not till later that proper fireplaces with a chimney were constructed.

/99: Illustrations./

/100/ The Albanians

II.

000 1. Woman from the Arbrie on the highland pastures of Kalmak. 2. Mohammedan Albanian. 3. Women from Scutari with wide breeches. 4. North Albanian shepherdess. 5. North Albanian woman with a wide apron. 6. Swimming bag and a raft of intertwined willow twigs floating on swimming bags; on the raft the swimmer's bundle of clothing. 7. Ferry made of a double canoe with planks raising the edge. 8. Canoe with booms on both sides. 9. Wooden plow. 10. Cross-section of a turbine mill. 11. Husking of corn by means of threshing flails. 12. Two-wheeled ox-cart. 13. Albanian from the region near Dibro. 14. Hand mill. 15. A pouch made of beech tree bark used for picking berries. 16. Peg with markings for water line use. 1

142 The Albanians are amply medium-sized, powerfully built, mostly with short heads, with a narrow, long face. Blue eyes and
000 light hair occur not infrequently. In many cases the men shave their

1 For illustrations, see 1: Karutz, E1 Europe, cat. 116, p. 69a--Analyst
2 See 1: Karutz, E1 Europe, Cat. 116, p. 67a--Analyst

342 monly used than at present. The shift from wheat to maize as staple cereal deprived the farmers in many parts of Albania of roofing material.

[353] The interiors of most houses are quite bare, with no carpets on the hewn plank floors, and
• [354] little decoration on the walls. In the older houses a fireplace covers about 10 square feet of floor area, and the smoke finds its way out through the thatch or roof tiles. In so doing, it cures meats hung in a rack above the fire, particularly in Catholic houses where pork is preserved for the winter.

The introduction of the *kulla* brought with it some drastic architectural innovations. The *kulla* is a 3-storied square tower, built with one purpose in mind—defense. Nopcsa finds a high correlation between the incidence of *kullas* in different villages and *bairaks*, and that of death by violence. The lower floor of the *kulla* is for the shelter of animals. The second and third are for habitation. One door opens into the stable below, a second, up a flight of bare steps, to the living quarters.

With a multi-storied structure something had to be done about smoke. Hence fireplaces were built one above the other, and a high
[514] chimney ensured draft. One of the principal troubles with the old-fashioned house was its lack of a toilet. The feuding Gheg, attending the needs of nature in a corn field of a frosty morning, made an excellent target to his enemies hiding in ambush, and the feudal code contained no sporting rules to outlaw this easy shot. The *kulla*-builders therefore constructed an overhanging enclosed balcony of masonry, to serve as "W. C." In the conflict between sanitation and safety, safety won. The drain hole is made crooked to prevent pot shots from below. Since there are few windows, and these are built more for gunplay than for light or ventilation, a strong draft usually rushes up the drain hole. Down below in a heap against the wall the refuse accumulates, and were it not for the healthy mountain climate and the hardihood of the mountaineers, epidemics would be commoner than they are.

Gheg houses have both a social and an economic implication. They are usually large, and accommodate an extended family and its animals. Serving for defense, they reflect the

342 [562] local independence of the families within them. In the *kullas*, women are placed on the second floor, men on top; or else the women will live in a nearby unfortified house, while the men take refuge in the *kulla*. This reflects the inviolability of women in the local feuding law.

333 *Kulla*-building requires the skill of professionals. All stones are squared, and carefully set in mortar. The fireplaces and chimneys must be properly aligned and made to draw. The great height of the walls requires scaffolding. Nopcsa[3] says that they are built by itinerant masons, and that in 1908 they cost between 440 and 660 crowns (110–165 dollars). I was told several times when I asked that the *kullas* were built by masons from Dibra,[4] who also build them in Montenegro, Bosnia, and elsewhere in Yugoslavia. Exactly where in Dibra these masons come from I do not know. I have never seen one at work, nor did any appear in our series.

354 These houses, of whatever type, are heated by wood, which at the same time cooks the meals. In most of the region there is plenty of firewood, but in the northern limestone region it is scarce and must be sought afar. The mountaineers earn a little spare cash by carrying loads of firewood down to the market towns to sell.

In many houses in 1929 a primitive form of illumination was still employed. When it grew dark the host would lay a number of pine splinters in several iron racks, hanging from the roof, and light them. The oil in the wood would provide enough light to see by, but hardly enough for reading. In other houses, however, they used candles, and in still others oil lamps. Kerosene has been packed into this country in square 5-gallon tins for some time, and the tins themselves are as much sought after as their contents.

291 Gheg clothing has received even more attention than their housing. The costumes are picturesque, and make fine collections. They vary from tribe to tribe, *bairak* to *bairak*, and in some cases between villages. After six months of travel over the mountains I was able to tell where a man came from in many cases by the cut of his jacket, the color of his

[3] Nopcsa, 1925, p. 62.

9:Megas I,B-5,4 (no date) 1951 EH1 Greece
Albania EG1
Yugoslavia EF1
A 342 Y [342]

walls or woven branches and were thus converted into a cave dwelling, which is also met in many places of the Herzegovina (1).

But also the trogle, that other form of semi-underground dwelling which, as already said, was from time immemorial used by the Thracians in Scythia Minor and Dardania, is also to be found in the plain between the Scodra lake and Tuzi, which is near the frontier in the area of the Hoti tribe, and it constitutes to-day a form of temporary housing.

Nopcsa describes the construction of this hut as follows: «A trench is first dug in the ground, having 6 m. length, 3 m. width and 0.30 m. depth, in a parallelopiped (see fig. 62). A stone wall is then built on all sides of the trench, it excels the ground by 0.30 m. on the long sides and on the short sides by almost 2 m., and is continually reduced in its width. The main wooden beam is then fixed on the short side walls, and a saddle type roof is erected, covered with hay. Earth is then accumulated on the outside of the walls, so that the ends of the roof come into contact with it. The earth is soon covered with wild plants, and its artificial character is covered with green in a very short time; only roofs project then from the ground, and nothing else is seen in the inhabited areas. The hight of the hut in the inside is from 1.3 m. to 2 m. The entrance is constructed on one of the short sides, not higher than 1.2 m. It looks like an opening which is not closed by a door, but simply with thorny bushes during the night. On the wall that faces the door a fireplace is built. In winter time shepherds and flocks live together in those huts, whose little space is thus sufficiently warm and protected from the glacial North winds sweeping the Hoti valley.

Fig. 62. Plan and section of a semi-underground hut near Tuzi (Nopcsa, Albanien, fig. 1)

A [354] [231]

The last type of temporary houses of Northern Albania is that of huts built over the surface of the ground. The form of these huts is a parallelopiped; they are constructed of wood and their walls are of reeds or woven branches covered with a clay layer. These huts are widely used in summer pastures and lowlands near the sea.

1) R. Meringer, Das volkstümliche Haus in Bosnien und der Hercegövina, 273 and foll. Fig. 69.

342 the above single-room house; thus there are now two doors in the house, corresponding to the internal, in fact only theorical, division of the room (1) (fig. 64). The floor consists of well beaten earth.

In later years, this internal division of the room was materielised by the erection of a real wall dividing the room into two serarate [354] spaces. In some areas, this dividing wall runs parallel to the long side of the house; two dwellings are thus formed, each having a separate fireplace (Plate XVIII 5). But the most common division of space is that done by a transversal wall, i.e. running at right angles

Fig. 63. Houses near Dinoshi, in the area of tribe Gruda
(Nopcsa, Albanien, fig. 34)

to the main pole. This wall is always built of lighter material (woven branches or planks) than the outer walls.

[354] [574] Of the above two rooms one contains the fireplace and it is the dwelling of men and the guest-room for visitors. The other, with no fireplace, is a sort of ante-room and it is used as cellar and dwelling for women. (Plate XVIII 3).

171 342 354 The entrance is always in the ante-room, through which one enters the main room where the fireplace is. This is, according to Nopcsa, a difference to be noted when comparing the above house to the corresponding Serbian and Croatian, which has the fireplace in the ante-room, as we have seen. This difference is also to be noted in the tripartite Albanian house. In Jugoslav and Rumanian regions,

1) The two separate doors can also be seen as a rule in houses of the villages in Attica. See **St. Kyriakidis**, Σπίτια καὶ καλύβια τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἐν Ἡμερολ. Ὁδοιπ. Συνδέσμου, 1926, p. 67.

9:Megas I,B-5 (no date) 1951 EH1 Greece
Albania EG1

342 the central-room, which has the entrance and the fireplace, is used
354 as a kitchen, and the two rooms on each side are living rooms. On
[171] the contary, in Albania and in Herzegovina—had Nopcsa known the Greek house he would have added Greece(1)—there are rooms with fireplaces on each end of the house; a simple entrance between them is, according to Nopcsa, (and others before him), a proof that this room was previousley used as a stable (p. 39) (Plate XVIII 13). It must be noted that the fireplace has been moved from the party wall and is now always against the external wall of a short side, because this one is, as we have already said, more stoutly built than the middle one. This is the reason why in Middle Albania where, as

342

Fig. 64. Winter dwelling of the Nikshi baïraktar in Bregumatja
(Nopcsa. Albanien, fig. 18)

354 noted by Hahn, the entire hut is usually built of timber, the wall of one narrow side, where the fireplace is built, is always made of stone or bricks.

Nopcsa attributes the construction of two-storey buildings in Albania not to a need to increase living space in hight, as it would be probable in a country where a horizontal increase is not always possible, because of the mountainous nature of the ground, but to the same reason why the floor of a wheat-store is built high over the ground, namely to the need for protection from dampness(2).

An example of a simple two-storey house is given by the plan

1) Nopcsa knows the Greek dwellings only from the book of **De la Guilletière** Lacédémoine ancienne et nouvelle, Paris 1676, noting here and there some happy comparisons in building and other habits of Albanians and Maniates (pp. 39-54).

2) See **Fr. Oelmann**, p. 73, On the Composition of Multi-floored Buildings.

of a house at Kolaj (in Mali Rencit) (Plate XVIII 6) where some families of the Klmeni tribe spend their winter. The ground floor comprises a store-room and a stable for the horses. The two rooms of the upper-floor have each their own entrance. The ascent to the upper-floor is made by a stone-built twin-arm staircase, inorganically attached to the outside wall of the frontage. Fireplaces are also here situated on the narrow sides of the house, just as in ground-floor houses and huts. 342 [354]

Apart from the above two-room houses, there are also in Albania two-storey houses with one or two rooms, having at their long side wall at the frontage, an open portico, a prostoon. The roof of this veranda is supported by wooden poles. In Albania we meet both forms of it: with both its sides open called then a «zardag»; the other, when its sides are closed by walls, known as «shamashin» (Figg. 66 and 67, Plate XVIII 7 and 8).

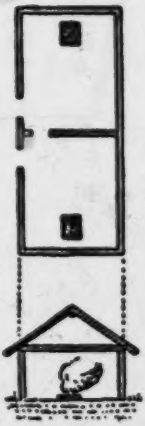

Fig. 65. Plan and section of a two-room dwelling (Nopcsa fig. 19)

The ascent to this veranda is made by a stone-built staircase, inorganically touching it; the staircase is either massive or it forms a semi-circular arcade under the landing. Nopcsa is right when he considers the one-floor wide fronted prostyle houses as a forerunner to the above type of Northern Albanian house; the former can be seen in Proseku, to the South of the area he surveyed, also in Middle and Southern Albania, and has infiltrated from the South to the North of the country.

Nopcsa is also right when he considers the prostoon, veranda, as that element of the building, whose different variations contribute to the increase of living spaces and lead to the perfection of the housing form.

According to Nopcsa, the first move towards a more composite form in the Albanian houses can be seen in the old house of the Mali Kencit area (Figg. 68 and 69). An external stone staircase leads to the veranda, which is supported by stone pillars and is enclosed on both sides (shamashin). Wooden poles support its roof; but the openings between them are closed with wooden planks on both ends. Two store-rooms or cellars have thus been formed, receiving light from small openings, sky-lights. Separate doors lead from the veranda to the two rooms of the first floor, that communicate by an inside door as well. Both rooms have fireplaces situated exactly at the [354]

9:Megas 1,B-5,4 (no date) 1951 EH1 Greece
Albania EG1

342 middle of the external narrow side walls. There are no chimneys.
[354] The smoke escapes through the roof. Stone walls and wooden planks divide the ground floor under the veranda as well as the first floor into various spaces used as stables or store-rooms.

Nopcsa says (p. 41) that if, during the process of evolution the prostoon of our Albanian house is enclosed by wooden planks or by

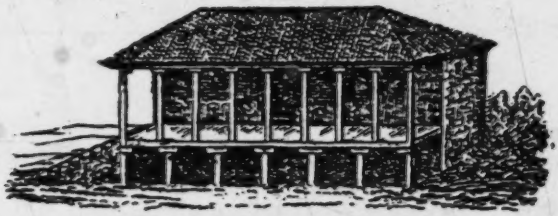

Fig. 66. House with prostoon in Brebula
(Nopcsa, Albanien, fig. 23)

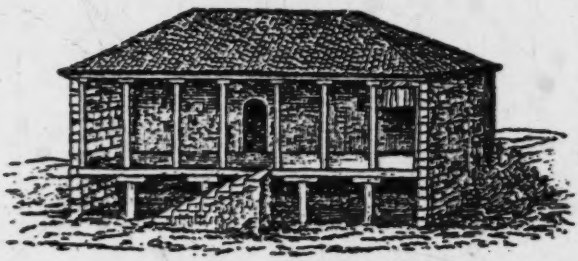

Fig. 67. House with prostoon in Toplana
(Nopcsa, Albanien, fig. 24)

a wall on the front, it is possible that such a house originally one-roomed, is on its plan very similar to a two-roomed house divided in length; but the absence of a fireplace in the front-room as well as its use are even then enough for us to recognize the evolution which took place».

This is very clearly shown in the plan and the vertical section of the first-floor of a house in Vuksanlekaj (in the South of Podgoritsa) (Fig. 70). This was originally a single-room house. Later, one part of the room was divided off, thus forming a small room with no fireplace. In this house, the veranda is not supported by wooden

9:Megas 1,B-5,4 (no date) 1951 EH1 Greece
Albania EG1

342 reason for building another house would be the dissolution of family
[592] bonds.
[171] Consequently, the system which exists in the Slav countries, to build separate, additional, small dwellings for young or married members of the family, is foreign to the housing customs of the Albanians.

As Nopcsa remarks (p. 49), a more developed and organically disposed house, like that pictured in Fig. 72, cannot easily be expanded, because of the serious difficulties created by a corridor running along it, as well as for the position of fireplaces and staircase. That these difficulties may be overcome, is shown by the house of Trushi (in Zadrima) Fig. 73.

[354] In this house, fireplaces have been moved to the front long wall and placed between two windows. Two staircases have been built

Fig. 73. Big house in Trushi, in the plain of Scodra
(Nopcsa, fig. 32)

in addition, with two prostoa opening at the centre. A twin house has thus been formed, each of which it is completely separate from the other. By the wooden extensions of both prostoa, some of which
[251] project and are supported dy wooden beams, there are formed some washing places known from our own villages; or cupboards, for victuals, that are protected against mice on the one hand, and are in a cool air draft on the other.

Similar constructions are seen in the veranda of an old two-storey house of Scodra (Fig. 74). This house is more than 125 years old and it is built at right angles, because of the smallness of the building plot. The ground floor includes a weaving room, an oil press, a stable, a wood store, etc.; living rooms are all in the upper floor.

10: Lodge S-5 (1919, 1939)1941
EF6 Serbs
Albania E61

342 low-pitched roof is tiled in red, with dormer-like smoke-
712 holes, or tall, lidded chimneys. The strong wooden doors are round or square at the top ; the doorways often formed by lintels and side-pieces of wood, or arched with stone. Windows are few, and very small, often mere loopholes or slits a few inches across. Glass is rare : the openings may be barred by twisted twigs. In the stone houses they are often outlined by a frame of regularly shaped and spaced blocks. The guest-room is lighted by rather larger windows, which are nowadays generally glazed, though old-fashioned paper windows still linger in some parts. The side of the house facing the road is blind, though sometimes a few narrow slits are pierced just under the eaves.

342 The peasants themselves give as a reason for building
712 such fortress-like houses that they have lived so long in dread of hereditary enemies, often very numerous because
627 of the constant blood-feuds. These, like feuds in all countries, often arose over a woman, a runaway or a stolen wife. They said to me frankly : "Under Turkey we could pursue our wives, and kill them with their lovers ; but now we are forbidden to do this. A slit is wide enough for us to shoot through, not wide enough for us to be shot at. No enemy can see into the house through it, let alone climb in by it. And then a woman cannot go out by it to keep a tryst, nor can a man come in to find her." For similar reasons, all these dwellings have inside sanitation—small
[514] apse-like closets built of the same material as the house, and apparently clinging to it.

352 The ground floor contains the small dark kitchens where the women and children eat their meals. They have floors of hard earth, and fireplaces of the huge projecting kind, or
[354] small open fires with smoke-holes above, with a few cooking-
[415] vessels of baked clay set at their edges : the flour-chest stands behind the door. On either side are the storerooms.

343 An open-fronted shed holds the carts and ploughs, with the stables and barn not far off. The stable is lofty, its roof of bare rafters being continuous with the roof of the first floor, so that one may look down on the horses through the slits in the end rooms of this storey.

10: Lodge S-5 (1919, 1939)1941
EF6 Serbs
Albania EG1

A wide rudely made ladder leads to the first floor, along which runs a passage, or *hodnik*, four or five feet broad, made of uneven and draughty planks that give precarious hold to Western shoes. Dark cupboards of rooms open on both sides, one for each married man of the *zadruga*, with his wife and children. Sometimes they possess a window-slit, sometimes not. They are furnished with nothing besides a home-made plank bed, covered with the much-valued long-fleeced sheepskin rugs, made from sheep that have never been shorn, a clothes-chest, a loom, a distaff, and a stock of cotton and fleece.

In houses with only one top storey the large guest-room takes up the whole width of the house at one end of the passage. At the other end is the small apse-closet. But in a house with two upper storeys the entire top floor is devoted to the guest-room, which is reached by another perilous home-made ladder.

This guest-chamber is far the largest and best-furnished room in the house; its ceiling, however, is as low as the rest. The floor-boards fit better, although, as in the other rooms, the door rests on a fixed barrier, twelve inches high, which keeps off draughts from those who are reclining on rugs or mats. A half or a third of the floor is spread with carpets, and enclosed by a low wooden kerb. Here against the walls are laid many long stiff cushions, tight with wool or straw, and covered with coarse hand-woven woollen stuff, worked in bright greens, reds, whites, and purples, in chevron-like patterns on a black or yellow ground. These colours, in similar bold Albanian designs, are repeated on the light wood of the doors, unless these are carved instead. Outside the kerb stands a kind of bed-seat, about a foot high, with very simply carved back and arms, spread with the finest of the long-fleeced sheepskins. On one side of the room the fire burns within an immense chimney-place, projecting far into the room and reaching up to the low roof.

The men have their meals in the guest-chamber. They sit cross-legged and unshod upon cushions round the *sofra*, eating from the dishes brought as far as the door by the

buildings, fortress-like structure and small windows. House types thus serve as a clear index to the amount of feuding in any particular area. Where veranda houses prevail, conditions are fairly peaceful. This factor explains the almost mutually exclusive distribution of kulas and veranda houses in mountain areas, although how far this is borne out in lowland areas, I am unable to say. 341 578

Location and Types of Settlements. In the mountain regions west of Lake Scutari to Lake Ohrid one finds single farmsteads comprising one or two buildings. Only in the plains and at the foot of the mountains does one find Cvijić's Ibar type of settlements (Nopcsa, 1925: 6). This type is characterized by widely spaced, dense hamlets (Cvijić, 1918: 219). In southern Albania the village form is variable but agglomerated villages with crooked roads predominate (Cvijić, 1925: 224, Map IV). 361 [133] [341] [491]

House Types. Buildings of wickerwork and plaster are found only in the coastal plains, and even there they are rare (fig. 47). In the extreme north one finds houses of boards or logs. Most buildings are of stone; one finds some use of dry masonry, but generally mortar is used. Stone is preferred because it gives protection from fire and gunshot. In south and central Albania bond timbers are inserted into the stone walls; this pattern is lacking in northern Albania. The combination of stone foundation and wooden second story, found in Serbia, Bosnia, Rumania and Siebenburgen is missing in Albania (Nopcsa, 1925: 30). 342 184 [171]

Roofing may be of straw, shingles, slate, stone slabs or tiles. The simplest buildings in the mountains have roofs of corn stalks. Tiles are common both in the coastal and mountain regions. Roofing of stone slabs is widely distributed; most dairy houses in the high mountains are covered in this manner (Nopcsa, 1925: 31-32). High shingled roofs, common in Bosnia and eastern Montenegro, are found only in the extreme north of Albania. Gabled roofs predominate north of the Drin River; south of it one finds hipped roofs. Widely projecting eaves are absent. The kulas may have low pyramidal roofs and occasionally desk roofs. In general, roofs tend to be flat. When the roof is hipped, the chimney tends to be in the center of the short side (Nopcsa, 1925: 31-32). Chimneys are not typical. [171]

The simplest type of house is the one-room log house with a low roof of short thick shingles. Cracks in the wall are stuffed with moss; windows are lacking, and light enters through the open door and openings in the roof. The open fireplace has hung over it a deflector of boards plastered with mud; smoke escapes through the roof (Nopcsa, 1925: 33). 342 [354]

In the coastal regions of northern Albania, reed is abundant and walls are made of woven reeds. The roof is likewise of reeds. These buildings are generally plastered on the outside. Occasionally the roof is of unfired bricks (Nopcsa, 1925: 35). [824] [184]

on the wall. When the stairway leads to the second floor on the outside, the ground floor is generally used by women and also has the stables (Nopcsa, 1925: 58). Since the space in the kula is limited, women commonly reside in a one-story women's house, which is not necessarily built like the kula. If the kula gets too small for the family a second one may be built; the new entrance facing the old. They try to have the entrance protected by some other building and not directly in view. 342 712

Interior partitioning walls are never of stone, as this is too heavy and would have to be continued to the ground floor. Partitions are generally of woven brushwood, boards or sometimes large objects are placed so as to form a division. Windows are missing entirely in simpler houses. In the mountains they are small, narrow, glassless and resemble loopholes. They are just large enough to look through, and at night are shut with heavy boards. The fireplace is always along the short wall of the house. It is square in form and made of stone slabs bordered by wooden beams, or of stones that are half buried in the ground. When the floor is of wood an area 20 centimeters deep is cut out for the fireplace and filled with mud for insulation from the fire. This is necessary in two-story houses. The fireplace generally rises only 10 centimeters above the floor. A horizontal beam may extend from the wall over the fireplace. On it is attached a metal chain on which hangs the cauldron. Sometimes a grating of wood is suspended over it for drying meat and to attach pots. The ceiling usually does not project over the fireplace. Sometimes a baldachine-like structure is placed over it; this is a wooden frame, filled with wickerwork and plastered with mud. Between the wall and the fireplace there is often a built-in stone bench. This is sometimes set into a niche. Occasionally there is a smokehole set over the niche (fig. 55) (Nopcsa, 1925: 81). 342 342 354 [417] [352]

Farm Buildings. The yard enclosure is generally a fence of wicker. Occasionally the fields are also enclosed, but less completely. The fence may consist of poles stuck into the ground at regular intervals and bound in two or three places with twine. It may be of wickerwork or poles set close to one another and fastened with a horizontal beam close to the top. Dry masonry is also used (Nopcsa, 1925: 15-16). The yard may be enclosed by stone walls, 7-8 feet high, which are connected with the buildings, together with which they form an enclosure (fig. 43) (Patsch, 1904: 26-27). Nopcsa maintains that the high enclosures and large portals are lacking in Catholic settlements. I was unable to find out just how prevalent high stone walls are in Albania. While one might assume them to be an advantage in defense, one finds that many of the fortress-like buildings are surrounded by extremely weak fences (Nopcsa, 1925: figs. 9, 30, 41). 351 [712]

The kukor is a frame of horizontal boards set on poles 2 meters high. It is not roofed over and is reached by a ladder, generally a notched tree trunk. It is used for the safekeeping of meat, etc. (Houses do not have an attic for storage.) (Nopcsa, 1925: 19-20). The koš for the storage of corn is the same as that used in Serbia, i.e. a circular wickerwork structure. 343 [251] [171]

17:Thurnher E-4 (no date) 1956 EF6 Serbs
ALBANIA EG I

ALBANIA

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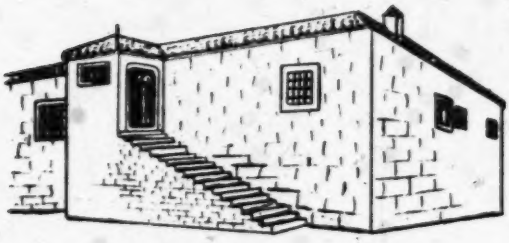

Fig. 53 Building with Stairway House

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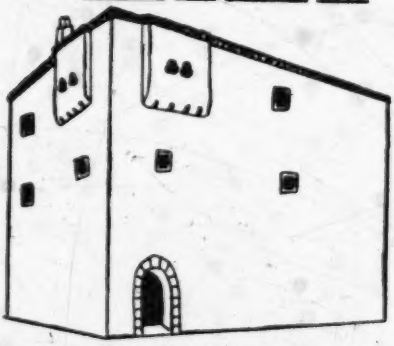

Fig. 54 Kula in Northern Albania

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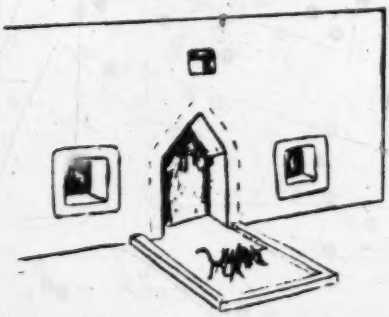

Fig. 55 Fireplace with Niches and Opening for Smoke

[P.86-M]